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Friends of the Children - Portland Postsecondary Preparation Recommendations

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Spring 2013

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Background Information

Defining Postsecondary Preparation

The process of defining “postsecondary success” is an integral part of preparing for it. Ultimately, postsecondary success begins as a goal within the formal education system because it denotes success after high school. But then we must ask, “What is the goal of that high school education?” In my time as a research intern with Friends of the Children (FOTC), concepts of productivity, access, and knowledge have all been central to answering this question. On one level, the question has a pragmatic answer: FOTC youth should be able to earn a living wage. On another level, the question is much more abstract because FOTC spends a great deal of energy dedicated to holistic youth development. On this level, postsecondary success is about youth becoming self-actualized, content adults who are capable of supporting themselves materially and emotionally, and able to positively contribute to society.

It is often implied (but not regularly stated) that in the case of class and/or race minority youth postsecondary success involves a battle against marginalization. Thus, I would argue that postsecondary preparation at FOTC should be the holistic way mentors assist youth in reaching new horizons. This is namely about FOTC enabling youth to realistically select from the same options in front of more privileged youth. They should be able to make truly informed choices about how they will spend their time, make a living, and participate in their communities as adults.

In order for education to serve as a tool for social justice in this way, the underbelly of power relations within educational institutions and the professional world must be addressed. In this context, postsecondary preparation is the way mentors can help youth use education as an effective tool in fighting marginalization. This means preparation is both about grade-level readiness and system navigation in light of youth identity.

Based on strong initial feedback from FOTC mentors and other staff, this recommendation will not be about college access alone, but it will be oriented toward allowing youth to choose access to university-level education to the greatest extent possible.

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Methods

My work as a research intern at FOTC is part of my master's degree in anthropology at Portland State University. Both my time spent at FOTC and the authorship of this recommendation are part of my final degree project. Before becoming a student at Portland State University, I taught 6th grade and worked as a non-profit college counselor to marginalized middle school and high school youth in Southern California. I want to use my background in anthropology, education, and direct-service, non-profit work to help FOTC find holistic strategies for postsecondary preparation programming.

My time at FOTC began by discussing ideas for the Successful Futures Initiative with Louis Cohen, my internship supervisor. Together, we created plans for the postsecondary forum (the Successful Futures Forum), which occurred in November 2012. Just before the forum, Gary Clemmons also joined Louis in leading the postsecondary initiative. Informally, he also took on a role in guiding my internship.

At the Successful Future's Forum, Louis, Gary, and I gathered information about mentor and staff opinions regarding postsecondary preparation. Small groups met to discuss specific topics and document their thoughts. FOTC mentors and staff also shared information in a large group discussion. We categorized all information from the forum and put it into an excel spreadsheet. We also made this information available to all forum attendees.

Louis, Gary and I used the data from the forum to shape weekly meetings about the postsecondary initiative. Both Gary and Louis began to pursue projects that would begin immediately, while I began learning more about the ongoing work of FOTC. The forum results and these ongoing meetings with Louis and Gary were highly influential in shaping the questions I asked and the topics I pursued.

In order to understand the role of the FOTC mentor and current mentor practices, I conducted interviews, participant-observation, and focus groups. Over the course of approximately three months, I interviewed mentors, participated in mentor-youth meetings, and attended group events. In addition, I spoke with numerous other staff members formally and informally. I also conducted two focus groups, one with each adolescent team.

In order to provide an opportunity for more mentor-led research, I also facilitated two mentor work groups. One group contained two primarily adolescent mentors and the other contained three primarily elementary mentors. The goals of these work groups were largely undefined in an attempt to minimize my influence. Based on the forum results, each work group member decided what kind of information gathering to pursue in light of the Successful Futures Initiative. The

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conversations I facilitated at these work group meetings influenced my recommendations. The adolescent work group transformed into an on-going focus group; the mentors conducted activities of their choice and returned to the group to debrief their experiences. The elementary work group hosted several interesting conversations, but was unable to complete their planned data collection and analysis.

As is always the case, my results are subjective. My own experiences and biases shaped the gathering and analysis of the data as well as my final recommendations. I recognize that my identity as a white, middle-class, woman impacted this process in multiple ways. My previous professional experiences, both as a middle school teacher and non-profit college preparation counselor to foster youth also greatly shaped my outlook on this project.

Lastly, I find it vital to recognize FOTC mentors and other staff members who helped me learn about current practices and future organizational aspirations. In particular, my internship supervisors contributed greatly to this report through their guidance and thought-provoking conversation. FOTC mentors who elected to participate in interviews with me and/or allow me to join them on youth outings were especially giving of their time and energy.

I believe it is the mark of an excellent organization to allow an outsider like me to dig around for inconsistency and weakness in the name of bettering services. While this document offers a critical look at FOTC postsecondary practices from an outsider's perspective, it should not be considered a verdict on the important work that FOTC mentors and staff do on a daily basis. It was an honor to witness the FOTC team offer hope, care, and opportunity to some of the Portland area's most marginalized youth. Thank you.

Current Mentor Practices at FOTC

FOTC mentors each have a unique style of supporting postsecondary preparation with their youth. There is a wide array of explicit and embedded postsecondary preparation strategies evidenced. In the following paragraphs, I will summarize this array of support. These summaries will establish a general understanding of how FOTC is currently supporting postsecondary success.

Deep Relationships and Personalized Support

A strong trend among mentors at FOTC is the importance they place on building meaningful relationships with their youth. This component of their work is viewed as the essential element to the mentoring relationship. Much of the support that FOTC grants youth is thought to flow from this crucially deep relationship. Thus, postsecondary preparation at FOTC is often contextualized within the boundaries of this relationship.

Mentors spend a great deal of time developing and sustaining mutual trust and care in their bond with youth. Particularly significant is the deference they place on each relationship. Often mentors expect youth to require six months to a year before they have sufficiently bonded with a mentor. A mentor's departure or reassignment is considered a stressful and generally difficult event.

A great deal of a mentor's daily work is spent coordinating or participating in meetings with one or more youth. Weekly contact provides for a dichotomous mentor outlook on the impact of their work; they are significant adults in the lives of their youth, capable of positive influence and guidance, but they lack the power to protect their youth from a great deal of oppression that exists outside the mentor-youth relationship. This oppression is identified in many forms of poverty, abuse, racism, and sexism. Thus, mentors spend ample time attempting to counteract oppression indirectly; they hope to instill in youth the wherewithal that they have both unconditional value as humans and strength to withstand great challenges.

The mentors' work is steeped in the particulars of each youth's needs. In general, FOTC youths' challenges swiftly evolve so that a great deal of time and energy is devoted to keeping pace with changes. Given the moving target that is each youth's needs and the depth that characterizes the mentor-youth relationship, mentors view their work with youth as very individualized. The topics of conversation and framing of activities are thought to be uniquely and organically selected for each meeting; the nature of the mentor-youth bond and the specific experiences in the life of the youth are considerable factors on a weekly basis. Even mentors who use concrete objectives as guiding principles in their practice with

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youth recognize the need to regularly prioritize the unexpected when a particular behavior or experience cues them to do so.

The intimacy of the mentor-youth relationship, the ever-changing characteristics of meetings with youth, and the complexities that mentors endure as they battle oppression in the lives of their youth all contribute to a mentor's perspective on FOTC management. Assessments, goal setting, strategies, initiatives, and group programming are seen through a lens that places primacy on the personalized support of each youth. Thus, there are mixed feelings about initiatives like this one on postsecondary preparation. Tools for assessment and goal setting are not inherently disruptive, but they become disruptive when they are given priority over the expertise of the mentor on the individual lives of youth.

Commonly, the nature of the mentor-youth relationship provides for holistic and expansive visions of “success” or “happiness” that go beyond Milestone objectives or specific initiatives. These envisioned goals are closely tied to the values mentors hold dear. In other words, mentors' relationships with youth are very personal, so the personal views of mentors shape their desires for each youth's future. For example, many women mentors strive to help their youth develop as “strong females”; based on their own experiences as women, they consider it vital that girls learn to speak for themselves, develop ample self-confidence, and pursue their interests in light of forces that de-value the voices and interests of women. Another common example is the prioritization mentors place on community service. Many mentors reflect on formative experiences of hard work and service to others in their own lives, and in turn, desire similar experiences for their youth.

Motivation

Mentors consider motivation an important part of their work. With elementary-age youth, mentors tend to provide postsecondary motivation in terms of intelligence and interest. Mentors strive to highlight a youth's particular intellectual strengths and encourage dreams about the future in terms of a child's interests. For example, discussion about school is often grounded in a youth's past progress or positive comments about a youth's abilities. Furthermore, links between intelligence and future career choices are frequently presented. Overall, elementary youth respond positively to their mentors' motivation.

Threats to youth motivation at the elementary level, and its impact on school success in particular, are largely viewed as outside the sphere of the child. For example, emotional turmoil in the home and low rates of school attendance are often viewed as roadblocks to positive outlooks on school. Mentors often feel powerless to directly influence these kinds of challenges, but they continue to

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motivate students to work hard and dream about their future despite these roadblocks.

In general, adolescent mentors struggle with motivation in a different way. Many mentors consider a lack of motivation in adolescent youth to be a big problem in light of postsecondary readiness. They site apathy towards school and career development as one of the most daunting challenges in working with adolescent youth. Importantly, this is not true of all youth; many mentors continue to motivate youth through praise and celebration that is similar to that of elementary serving mentors, but calibrated to the desires of older youth. However, mentors widely report low motivation as a quality that plagues many of their youth in middle school and high school.

Although many mentors report poor results in motivating their adolescent youth despite ongoing attempts, some report success through strategies based on the mentor-youth relationship. Mentors attest that their deep relationships with youth allow them to engage in constructive conversations about the purpose of working hard towards school success and pursuing career-related interests. Mentors also suggest that positive experiences earning money or gaining exposure to careers of interest are motivating for adolescent youth.

Regardless of a particular youth's level of motivation, there is underlying consensus that motivation to work independently towards higher education and/or career goals is essential for adolescent youth. Mentors want their youth to have an intrinsic desire to actualize their dreams one realistic step at a time. They view the ability to do this as essential to any youth's future as an adult.

School Work and Tutoring

Every mentor is involved, to some degree, in the scholastic lives of their youth. However, mentors display a wide variety of involvement with teachers, schoolwork, and core academic development.

Many mentors at the elementary level visit youths' classrooms and/or communicate with youths' teachers. Some mentors have regular interactions with their youths' teachers; sometimes these mentors also regularly gather information about their youths' academic progress that informs their own practices with youth. Additionally, some mentors also act as go-betweens for teachers and tutors; they regularly update tutors about a youth's current progress or struggles in specific subjects and topics. Other mentors interact with teachers and schools more sporadically; they drop-in on their youths' classes and speak with their youths' teachers in order to get a summary of academic progress. These mentors might also

gather information that drives their practice with youth, but it is less specific than the information derived from regular and systematic visits or communication.

Importantly, many mentors base the style of their communication on efficiency and teacher availability. Thus, when mentors have several youth who attend the same school, mentors are more likely to visit those classrooms. Sometimes email communication with a teacher is used in place of a classroom visit because a mentor is unable to visit a particular elementary school regularly. Furthermore, many mentors find teachers difficult to reach in general. It is difficult for mentors to find a moment when teachers are available to talk with them about their youth. Often, a teacher's willingness to make time during a classroom visit or offer specific academic feedback about a youth is the guiding force in the quality of communication that occurs between mentor and teacher.

In general, mentors know far less about the academic lives of middle and high school youth. Mentors notice that older youth dislike classroom visits, so the practice is largely dismissed by the time youth reach middle school. There is little evidence of mentors communicating directly with middle school or high school teachers; most academic information is delivered directly from the youth to the mentor. Mentors at this level focus more on youth completing homework, staying organized, and studying for tests than they do on core academic development. Often grades alone are considered representative of academic development.

There were two other noteworthy trends in the area of scholarship support. First, many mentors exercise great caution in the emphasis on formal education. Many mentors believe that overemphasis on academic support can sour a mentoring relationship. Secondly, both a youth's attitude toward school and a youth's attendance record are often discussed in terms of "values". Thus, some students and their families are seen to value education less than others. Often mentors strive to accept this conceived difference in value systems at the same time they struggle with the academic consequences of low attendance and low grades.

Extra Curricular Exposure

Generally, mentors at FOTC prioritize efforts to expose their youth to new experiences. They recognize as important the opportunity for youth to try new activities, observe new environments, and interact with a variety of different people. This priority seems to be based in the belief that FOTC youth tend to be under-exposed to enrichment opportunities and middle/upper class environments. So, exposure to these otherwise unfamiliar experiences is viewed as highly enriching to well-rounded personal development.

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Mentors support elementary school age youth in a variety of extra-curricular activities. While some of these activities are selected based on individual youth interest, a good number of them seem to be restricted by scheduling. For example, sometimes a particular extra-curricular activity is chosen for two youth because they live close together or share a similar schedule. Thus, a mentor can provide both youth with an extracurricular opportunity while making transportation and scheduling as simple and efficient as possible. This type of coordination is viewed as vital to mentors scheduling time with all of their youth on a weekly basis. Lastly, youth do not often sustain one kind of activity, but tend to survey many kinds.

In addition to organized extra curricular activities, mentors frequently use their meetings to expose youth to new experiences, from trying different kinds of food, to museum visits, to outdoor excursions. Mentors of all age groups seem to greatly enjoy opportunities to share their own passions with youth. Mentors consistently seek new experiences for their youth based on feedback they get from their deep relationships.

Group programming for middle school and high school youth provides an avenue for youth to participate in enrichment activities in a peer social groups. Organized outings and service projects occur regularly, but not all youth attend. Again, efficiency in scheduling plays a large role in availability for these group programs.

High school youth seem least likely to participate in enrichment activities directly sponsored by FOTC. This trend seems to occur for numerous reasons. High school youth are: more likely to participate in extracurricular activities tied to their school or community, less motivated to attend activities, and/or prioritize opportunities to make money or spend time with friends over FOTC-organized activities.

Life Skills

Another big concern common among mentors is the need for life skill development. Many mentors hint that a four-year college degree is unlikely in some youths' futures, even beginning with elementary-age youth. These mentors view their youths' ability to follow basic directions, arrive to work on time, manage a personal budget, and prepare food as priorities in their development. Even among youth who are viewed as potential college attendees, mentors show great concern for their ability to live in the "real world".

Many conceptions of life skills are based on the personal experiences of mentors. They recognize the importance of these skills in their own lives and worry their youth will not learn them, and therefore suffer for it. For this reason,

differences in values, between mentors and youths' families, are often cited as the reason youth lack life skills.

Mentors explicitly and implicitly teach youth life skills in their daily practice. Mentors focus great amounts of attention to problem solving, and to a lesser degree, food preparation, and money management. Across all age-levels, mentors engage youth in ongoing conversations about specific problems and encourage youth to think critically about solving conflict. Most mentors take clear steps to help youth engage in problem solving on their own; they recognize that youth often need support to make sound decisions, but ultimately must learn to address conflict on their own.

Money is a popular issue among mentors and their youth. At the elementary level, some mentors encourage youth to understand principals of monetary exchange and savings. At the middle and high school level, concerns about earning and budgeting money are one of the popular topics in problem solving conversations.

Some mentors teach youth life skills revolving around behavior. This kind of learning often occurs by modeling and habitual action. For example, younger youth are often encouraged to greet adults in the room with a smile, direct eye contact and a handshake, perhaps because they are following the lead of their mentor, or because that is an expectation their mentors set in the past. Natural conversations about the lives of older youth and the lives of their mentors create opportunities to discuss beneficial behaviors. For example, one mentor suggested that she often discusses with her youth the need to accessorize their personalities according to the their environment. This advice is often couched in casual conversation or shared experiences.

Identity

While it is clear that all identities are accepted and honored at FOTC, issues of class, race and ethnicity, and to a lesser degree gender and sexuality are not explicitly discussed on a regular basis. Although some mentors feel comfortable addressing these categories of identity with their youth, this seems to be an isolated practice. It is generally recognized that youth are marginalized, but the causes of this marginalization does not seem clear in the work between mentors and youth. It is much more common for mentors to site a family's struggles with addiction, neglect, abuse, employment, housing, or the criminal justice system than oppression in the form of classism or racism.

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Conversations between mentors and youth about gender and sexuality appear to be more common. These topics are usually addressed in terms of society's expectations and personal values.

In my experience speaking to mentors, it was rare that they explicitly recognized their own class and/or race/ethnic identity as playing a part in their mentoring practices with youth. On the other hand, it was common for mentors to site their gendered life experiences as influencing their mentoring practices. A large part of this trend is likely related to the practice of gender-specific mentor-youth pairing.

Ongoing Programmatic Elements

FOTC already has a number of developing or ongoing program elements that support postsecondary success. These program elements are not detailed in this report, but their role in postsecondary preparation at FOTC is important. They offer a foundation on which this report's recommendations rest. This includes the following program elements:

- Summer internship program
- Professional mentoring database
- Literacy initiative
- Math initiative (planned)
- Tutoring programs
- Extra-curricular exposure
- College tours
- Junior and senior graduation checklist
- Test preparation
- Study skills support
- A myriad of case-based and personalized resources

Post-secondary Recommendations

#1) Develop an Overarching Commitment to the Cultivation of Critical Social Navigation

Part of what can be systematically added to FOTC's postsecondary preparation is the explicit cultivation of *critical social navigation*ⁱ, CSN. Critical social navigation is one's ability to decode information in any social setting, and then put that knowledge into action in one's best self-interest. For all youth, the process of social navigation requires crossing borders between separate social worlds, but some youth cross seamlessly while others experience these boundaries to be extremely difficult to cross or impassableⁱⁱ. Often, social navigation requires an understanding of where the power resides and a firm grasp of the rules, both stated and unspoken, in order to find and access opportunity. Successful and fluid border crossing also requires strategies that enable the use of this knowledge without the sacrifice of significant aspects of self.ⁱⁱⁱ CSN accounts for this full spectrum of social awareness, decoding, and action. Thus it provides an essential foundation for problem solving and reasoning skills that are valuable to all youth, college or directly career bound^{iv}.

The critical analysis of this border crossing is an especially important tool for FOTC youth because they tend to identify with non-dominant forms of class, gender, sexuality, race, and/or ethnicity. Youth who are marginalized benefit from a critical perspective because they must intentionally evaluate and select appropriate strategies for fluid border crossing.^v Post-secondary education and middle-class career options often engage dominant social paradigms. Whereas middle-class and upper-class youth tend to be socialized by family, friends, and K-12 education to seamlessly navigate in dominant social settings, youth who assume non-dominant forms of identity have to do more work to 1) decode a system to which they have less exposure and 2) preserve aspects of their non-dominant identity.

FOTC mentors are invaluable in cultivating CSN in their youth. Let us take the support of a youth's education as an example. Institutionally, K-12 schools were founded and are predominately managed by people with forms of dominant identity. K-12 institutions are one of the major sites for learning about dominant forms of academic and social literacy. In other words, schools are places where youth learn about the skills they need to prosper in college and/or in their careers^{vi}. At the same time, environments that solely value dominant forms of knowledge often alienate marginalized students.^{vii} Given their intimate relationship with each youth, FOTC mentors have a unique opportunity to help bridge this gap. They can help their youth understand and successfully move through the dominant social setting that is K-12 education at the same time they can help them to preserve important aspects of their identity in the process. This social border crossing between home, community,

and school mimics the kind of work youth will need to do in order to pursue post-secondary education and/or career tracks in their own self-interest.

The role of the FOTC mentor in CSN can be viewed as that of translator, guide and coach.^{viii} As translators, they can help decode the dominant rules in light of a youth's particular experiences. These rules are not static; each rule carries a unique meaning given one's experiences. The role of translator depends on the deep relationships that FOTC mentors have with youth because it requires the mentor to tap into what the youth already knows and cares about.

As guides, the mentor supports a youth in making good choices in light of translation. Youth require a guide because the path is often unclear; it dances between points located in two or more social worlds. Importantly, the rules of these worlds often contradict one another. Thus, FOTC mentors can help youth construct bridges on which to travel between these multiple worlds fluidly.

As coaches, FOTC mentors can help youth practice fluid border crossings and new bridge construction with growing independence. Coaching is the binding aspect of CSN cultivation because it provides the time and space for youth to reflect on their identities in a variety of environments and take intentional steps toward pursuing their goals under the guidance of someone who is intimately aware of their journey. Coaching also allows goal setting to move away from a linear model; mistakes, frustrations, and challenges are opportunities for growth and possibly changes in course.

The cultivation of CSN is a long-term strategy for increasing motivation in youth because it is a means by which they can work towards a positive future without leaving behind meaningful aspects of their identity. Motivation to work towards success in school, build positive professional relationships, and prepare for one's professional adult life is dependent upon one's belief that this work can be done and that it will pay off. CSN allows youth to see a realistic future for themselves in college and/or a middle-class career path.

Below is a breakdown of the ways that Friends of the Children can increase and systematize critical social navigation through translation, guiding, and coaching.

Translating

- Direct conversations about CSN
- Decoding exercises
- Youth-driven goal setting and planning

Guiding

- Opportunities to practice intentional CSN in multiple environments
- Debriefing experiences that require intentional CSN
- Exposure to examples of non-dominant/dominant border crossing

Coaching

- Constructive feedback on CSN practice
- Youth reflection on their CSN over time
- Helping youth respond to and learn from set-backs and successes

Translating, Guiding, and Coaching Beyond “Values”

One essential step to the successful cultivation of CSN will be to abandon the oversimplified language of “values”. Too often, well-meaning mentors identify the source of differences between themselves and the youth they serve as a difference in personal values. This practice is detrimental for two reasons: it establishes static categories for complex and changing points-of-view and it exaggerates differences. This is not to say that differences do not exist, only that the value system of individuals and families are constantly changing and nuanced. For example, the statement that an individual “does not value education” only works to limit possibilities. Perhaps, the individual does not think school is important to her future because historically it has been unavailable to her family. Perhaps the individual prioritizes something over arriving to school on time. Perhaps the individual’s family does not promote school in a way that looks familiar to the mentor^{ix}. In any one of these three cases, a value judgment that says the individual “does not value education” is incorrect in its totality.

Instead of conversations about values, mentors should continue to have deep conversations about experiences, goals, and hopes. In these conversations, the need for CSN should be explained and referenced regularly. It should be viewed as a tool that all people use to analyze a social setting’s rules and act

according to this analysis. Importantly, it is the analysis that should be the focus, not the matching of behavior to rules. A full CSN analysis requires the following kinds of baseline information: a full understanding of the stated rules, a full understanding of the unspoken rules, a survey of which individuals or institutions hold power, and a solid understanding of how individuals in the situation might perceive a youth. Once this information is established, a youth should identify what she wants from the situation and why. Then, the youth should determine her options, in terms of her appearance, language, behavior, and/or associations, for getting what she wants given the baseline information. Lastly, she must determine which of these, if any, requirements are worth meeting given her desire.

These conversations should not be removed from FOTC mentors' own goals and hopes for their youth. At each step in the process of CSN analysis, the mentor will be an influential force in the process. A mentor's own experiences will flavor the analysis because the conversations are based within a deep relationship. This influence can work to expand a youth's possibilities; it represents a point-of-view they might not otherwise hear. For example, mentors are often the perfect candidates to help youth link their career goals to their formal education^x. The key is to reduce the limiting possibilities of this influence; value judgments narrow the field of analysis. Thus, mentors who have been trained to have critical awareness of their own social identities, and the way those identities shape their perspective, will be the best at supporting youth in critical thinking and learning.^{xi}

#2) Create Youth-led Success Plans

Where does this recommendation fall in CSN cultivation?

Translating

- Youth-driven goal setting and planning

Guiding

- Debriefing experiences that require intentional CSN

Coaching

- Constructive feedback on CSN practice
- Youth reflection on their CSN over time
- Helping youth respond to and learn from set-backs and successes

The idea of a youth-led success plan is not to create more paperwork! The idea is to formalize and put into action certain aspects of CSN cultivation. The plan is an on-going goal setting and planning tool¹ that is created in coordination between the youth and the mentor. As the youth develops, he should increasingly take over responsibility for the plan. This youth-led goal setting, strategizing, and evaluation, matched with adult feedback, will increase self-efficacy, an important element of motivation^{xii}.

The youth-led success plan should be used as a means by which mentors and team leaders identify and direct resources. To the greatest extent possible, the success plan should also be useful in other mentor tasks like the Roadmap assessment.

* See Appendix A for sample youth-led success plan

Each youth-led success plan should include a grade-specific master checklist that will guide tri-yearly goal setting and planning. This checklist is general enough that individual interests and strengths can easily be integrated, but detailed enough that it

¹ The youth-led success plan can also be viewed as a model for practice. In Appendix A, I present the plan as a living document, as it was originally designed. Based on initial FOTC feedback, I also present a re-working of the plan that both incorporates the FOTC Milestones and provides a conversational *model* for planning that is not based on a written document.

will serve as a reference point for every post-secondary preparation component to be engaged at each grade-level.

A youth success meeting should occur at the close of each school semester and at the close of the summer break. The timing is important so that the semester or summer can be debriefed as a unit of time, and goals and plans can be made for the upcoming unit of time. At the beginning of each youth-led success meeting between youth and mentor, the grade-specific checklist should be reviewed. This checklist represents every component of post-secondary readiness that is ideal at this grade-level. The checklist is a good opportunity for CSN translation conversations to occur.

Next, the previous youth success plan should be reviewed; what were the interests, strengths, growth areas and actions? What worked well? What did not work? This review is a good opportunity for CSN coaching; youth should have the opportunity to reflect on their CSN and mentors should help youth identify what they learned from these experiences. Mentors might also share what they learned about the youth, a particular situation, or CSN in general.

Lastly, interests, strengths and growth areas should be revised according to the checklist translation and coaching. New actions should be set according to changes.

The whole youth-led success plan (especially the “actions” section) should be used for the upcoming unit of time to: 1) direct resources to the youth and 2) guide and coach the youth as they use CSN to move through their actions. Mentors should make a copy of the youth-led success plans available to their team leaders and consult the interactive resource exchange (see recommendation #3) if they are in need of resources to help youth fulfill their action plans. Team leaders should take an active role in identifying and accessing such resources for mentors. At every grade level, this process should ensure that resources are used more exactly; the activities, support, and exposure in which youth engage should be largely based on their specific plans. At the same time, the burden to find and tailor resources for each youth should not fall on the mentor alone.

Keeping the actions of the youth-led success plan in mind, the mentor should regularly check-in with youth about their progress. In many cases they will need to take an active role in facilitating opportunities for the youth. Additionally, mentors should regularly debrief experiences that require intentional CSN from their youth (guiding) and offer youth constructive feedback on the experiences (coaching). This is another good time for youth to reflect on their use of CSN and think about how to overcome challenges they face (coaching).

Each mentor and youth should have the freedom to complete their youth-led success plan as they desire. With younger youth, mentors may wish to keep the

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process short and/or to break-up the process over two meetings because a youth's attention span is short. Regardless of the meeting format, the youth should grow increasingly involved in leading their goal setting and planning. As a youth moves into middle school and high school, the meeting could be formalized and ritualized. As a youth begins to demonstrate responsibility for sections of the success plan, additional funds should be made available so that an elegant restaurant or formal meeting room can be accessed for the meeting. This is an opportunity to translate the rules of a formal meeting and/or meal to older youth.

#3) Develop a Resource Exchange

The resource exchange should be a database that records all of FOTC's current resources and partnerships. This database should continuously be updated and expanded in order to serve in tandem with youth-led success plans. All FOTC staff should be encouraged to add resources to the database in the form of partnership information, activity ideas, and staff-created tools. One or two people should be charged with organizing and updating the resource exchange so that an easy-to-use and clear format is maintained.

The best way to encourage the use of the resource exchange is for team leaders to show mentors it is useful. When a youth-led success plan is shared with a team leader, she should try to find corresponding resources and direct them to mentors. In addition, this should only occur once the exchange is fully operational; the resources should be current and the partnerships well established so that mentors can focus on facilitating opportunities with a youth. Lastly, when a mentor engages one or more of their youth in an innovative way, the mentor should be encouraged to share their innovation as a resource on the exchange. After the exchange is established, a section of the database should highlight newly added resources.

* See Appendix B for the suggested resource exchange organization

* See Appendix C for a sample "mentor-created" CSN activity that might be placed in the resource exchange

#4) Engage in Frequent and Targeted Communication with Schools

Where does this recommendation fall in CSN cultivation?

Translating

- Direct conversations about CSN

Guiding

- Opportunities to practice intentional CSN in multiple environments
- Debriefing experiences that require intentional CSN

Coaching

- Youth reflection on their CSN over time
- Helping youth respond to and learn from set-backs and successes

Direct communication with adults from a youth's school life will allow for more pointed CSN cultivation related to formal education. Research demonstrates that communication between teachers and parents is particularly important because it provides for specific home activities that will lead to school success^{xiii}. FOTC mentors should engage in this kind of communication with teachers to guide all academic work they do with youth, from the supervision of tutoring to enrichment.

Practicing CSN skills at school will enhance a youth's overall educational experience. Research shows that positive school relationships are vital to student success^{xiv}. Mentors should act as translators, guides and coaches when it comes to youth developing positive working relationships with teachers, counselors, administrators, and other staff members. Mentors should also act as translators, guides, and coaches when it comes to youth developing positive peer relationships in the context of school.

Frequent and Targeted Communication

Mentor communication with teachers should be frequent and targeted. It is clear that a mentor's limited time and a teacher's hectic schedules make regular communication extraordinarily challenging. None-the-less, teachers work with youth extensively; their time with youth and professional expertise should both be maximized as a source resource by FOTC.

Frequency matters. Teachers are more likely to recognize a mentor as a resource, and a person for whom they *must* make time, if they are visible on a regular basis.

Introductory conversations, emails or notes that inquire as to the best time and means of communication should occur with every K-5 lead teacher. Middle school and high school teachers should be contacted based on the academic needs of the youth. This inquiry, and ongoing feedback, should be the basis of communication for the rest of the school year. This communication should occur at least once a week in grades K-2 and every other week in grades 3-5 (unless a youth requires more support).

Targeted communication matters. Regardless of how a mentor keeps track of academic progress, the mentor should be aware of and base academic support on the evolving details of a youth's life at school. This is important for two reasons: 1) if a youth has a competent teacher, this educational specialist will serve as a guide in how to support academic progress, 2) if a youth has an incompetent teacher, the mentor will need to be aware of the academic gaps in a youth's education in order to help close them. The evolving details of a youth's life at school include his/her: reading and math level, current units of study, current strengths in the classroom, and current weaknesses in the classroom. The only means by which to stay up-to-date on these details is to communicate in a targeted way with teachers.

Frequent and targeted communication with teachers should directly inform the work mentors do with their youth. For example, if a mentor is going to practice math with a youth during an outing, it should be based on mathematical concepts a teacher has recently suggested, not a general assessment by the mentor of a youth's skills. In this light, the interactive resource exchange should become highly valuable. Once fully developed, the interactive resource exchange should have academic tools arranged by grade and type (under "Grade-level Standards Practice"). Given that mentors have limited reliability in their schedules because they arrange and re-arrange meetings around the needs of their youth, the interactive resource exchange should be easy to access wirelessly and contain an array of useful activities at each academic level. Continuing the example used above, perhaps the youth in question is in 4th grade, but her/his teacher just told the mentor the youth is still lacking a solid understanding of multiplication as repeated addition. The mentor should be able to access Internet games, videos, and impromptu exercises about the basic concept of multiplication from grade-level standards in earlier grades.

Not only should frequent and targeted communication inform mentor-led activities with the youth, but it should also inform tutoring. Mentors should regularly update tutors on their communication with teachers. Thus, tutoring should be directly in-sync with youth needs based on their life in the classroom.

* See appendix D for a sample weekly progress report to be exchanged between mentor and teacher

#5) Highlight and Hire Mentors and Staff Who Represent Non-dominant Groups

Where does this recommendation fall in CSN cultivation?

Translating

- Direct conversations about CSN

Guiding

- Opportunities to practice intentional CSN in multiple environments
- Exposure to examples of non-dominant/dominant border crossing

This recommendation is really about improving the use of a human resource that already exists at FOTC. Friends and other staff at FOTC represent an array of experiences in terms of non-dominant/dominant border crossing. This diversity can be improved by hiring new employees who have similar experiences and can explicitly discuss their success in this process. In other words, FOTC should seek out new employees who identify with non-dominant group(s) who feel comfortable talking about their personal experiences in educational and professional worlds.

Mentors who have personal experiences like the youth FOTC serve can be excellent examples to youth. FOTC mentors already do great work in sharing ideas and supporting one another's youth as a team. Given this strength, all youth at FOTC will benefit from the highlighting of existing staff and hiring of new staff with especially strong skill sets in CSN. Mentors and other staff who feel comfortable should be asked to share their personal CSN experiences with youth who might share their identity traits or challenges. Additionally, a diverse assortment of mentors and staff should be asked to role-play or practice particular CSN skills with youth so that they have multiple opportunities to apply their skills with new people.

Mentors and staff who feel a particular affinity with CSN cultivation should be asked to host programming about specific topics. For example, perhaps a mentor notices that several high school youth have recently complained about institutionalized racism at their summer jobs. If this mentor has experienced similar kinds of institutionalized racism and feels comfortable, he should be empowered to hold a discussion group with the teens. This mentor could help the youth develop CSN tools to deal with their experiences. It is important to have mentors on staff who have faced this kind of oppression, so that they can speak first-hand about the complexities of responding in one's own best interest. Programming like this is important not only because it is responsive to the ever-evolving needs of FOTC youth, but it also creates a sense of shared action in the face of oppression like racism.

#6) Improve Friend Leadership in Group Programming

Where does this recommendation fall in CSN cultivation?

Translating

- Direct conversations about CSN

Guiding

- Opportunities to practice intentional CSN in multiple environments
- Exposure to examples of non-dominant/dominant border crossing

Given that adolescent mentors have a higher number of youth and are expected to incorporate more group activities into their practice, mentors should be given the tools to cultivate CSN in group settings. These situations require clear behavior expectations, well-planned activities, and effective strategies for dealing with conflict. Thus, clear behavior expectations should be established among all FOTC mentors, staff and volunteer. Mentors should receive training in facilitating group activities with adolescent youth. Well-planned activities should be developed before group programming begins.

* See Appendix E- Resources for creating critical social navigation activities

Consistent behavior expectations will go a long way in improving group programming. Once they are identified among staff, clearly communicated to youth, and regularly enforced, youth will begin to associate the expectations with each group activity. Thus, once behavior expectations are established, there will be fewer interruptions to the activities themselves. Importantly, this requires all mentors and staff to consistently uphold the expectations.

Many mentors need training for group facilitation. Mentors who excel with one or two of their own youth often flounder when the group grows in size, especially when they work with youth who are not their own. Group facilitation is challenging! Mentors should be given strategies for enforcing expectations, delivering content with clarity, prompting group discussions, and managing conflict.

Well-planned activities allow for mentors to adequately prepare for group facilitation. Once the logistics of an activity and the behavior expectations are in place, the mentor can dedicate her energy to an activity's content. Furthermore, activities that have a recognizable and real purpose are more likely to capture the attention of youth. If CSN is explicitly discussed on a regular basis, exposure to new experiences can be framed as opportunities to practice it. New activities and framing options should be developed and added to the resource exchange.

#7) Re-imagine High School Programming

The best way to maintain consistent contact with and remain an influence in the lives of high school youth is to provide mentors with maximum flexibility. As high school students become more independent, grow increasingly concerned with earning money, and develop a personal life all their own, they seem less available and willing to go on outings with their mentors or attend group programming. Mentors must be given the freedom to fit into the context of the youths' changing lives. In addition, mentors should be given incentive funds to promote behavior that supports the youth's success plan.

This recommendation is not about the elimination of one-on-one meetings between high school youth and mentors; these types of meetings are clearly necessary to maintain close relationships. However, in order to maintain regular contact with high school youth, alternative forms of contact should sometimes be allowed in their place. Mentioned earlier, small, mentor-led groups based on individual youth needs, concerns and interests would be a social and high-interest means by which high school youth could spend some of their time with FOTC. Also, phone conversations are a good way for mentors to facilitate productive conversations when a face-to-face meeting cannot occur.

A monetary incentive program should be established to promote actions outlined in high school youth-led success plans. Rather than a simple bribe, an incentive program would allow high school youth to focus on academics and extra-curricular activities^{xv}. In some cases, employment will be a part of a youth's success plan, but this should only occur when the employment is directly relevant to the youth's postsecondary goals^{xvi}. In cases in which a youth is concerned with meeting monetary needs more than gaining experience, it will be helpful for the youth to have an alternative option to earn money. If an incentive program allows youth to earn money because they are working hard to pursue their postsecondary goals, they will be working towards long-term goals at the same time they meet their short-term desires. In other words, FOTC would be recognizing the importance of short-term goals in the lives of teenagers, but provide motivational support so that long-term academic and career goals can be pursued simultaneously.

FOTC monetary incentives should be somewhat competitive with part-time, minimum wage jobs, but also strictly contingent upon the fulfillment of success plan actions. Each mentor should develop a youth-specific incentive plan that requires "work" in the following three areas: homework/academic enrichment, extra-curricular activities, and internship/professional development. Part of the incentive might also be tied to outcomes, like an improved grade, a positive report from a volunteer supervisor, a progress report from an after-school club's advisor, etc...

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Importantly, the incentive should be both specific to a youth's success plan and contingent upon demonstrated hard work and achievement.

The following are three possible incentive plans for high school youth. The point of these examples is not to suggest specific numbers, but to demonstrate the potential variety that might exist among plans.

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**Three Possible Incentive Plans for High School Youth
(\$150 per month maximum)**

Valerie's Incentives for February

\$5 per hour volunteering at the animal shelter (maximum 20 hours)

- Contingent upon hours report from hospital supervisor
- Paid weekly

\$50 for a grade of "C" or higher on math and science mid-terms

- Supports: Thursday afternoon study reviews with Mr. Reynolds (science teacher) and Saturday math tutoring with Judy
- Contingent upon review of graded exams (*with corrections already completed*) with mentor

Ralph's Incentives for February

\$5 per hour math and English tutoring (maximum 2 hours per week)

- Contingent upon hours report from tutor
- Paid weekly

\$50 for perfect school attendance and no dean referrals

- \$40 for only one absence or one dean's referral
- \$30 for only two absences

\$10 per hour to "apprentice" with carpenter (maximum 6 hours)

- Contingent upon mentor communication with carpenter
- Ralph must take the bus

Emilio's Incentives for February

\$10 for each after school meeting with the Robotics club, as vice president (maximum 4 meetings per month)

- Contingent upon Emilio upholding all the requirements of a vice president
- Mentor will sporadically check-in with advisor by email
- Paid weekly

\$10 for each satisfactory reading journal in AP English, weekly (maximum 4 reading journals per month)

- Contingent upon review of grades journals with mentor
- Paid weekly

\$10 for each SAT preparation class (maximum one class per week)

- Contingent upon completed workbook sections
- Paid weekly

\$30 for practice test score of 2000 or above

- Contingent upon review of test score print-out with mentor

#8) Create a Three-Tiered Tutoring System

FOTC already facilitates many tutoring opportunities for its youth. These opportunities should be more closely tied to the needs of the youth. Mentors should be given more options for tutoring and encouraged to choose the best one for each youth individually.

The service of a tutor can meet a myriad of needs^{xvii}. For the sake of this recommendation, tutoring will be viewed in three general sub-categories: exposure and enrichment, guided practice, and remediation. Each sub-category is valuable, but only if it is well suited to the needs of the individual receiving the service. For example, an intelligent undergraduate student who is willing to provide her time and energy to read and write with an elementary school student once a week is an excellent prospect! Additional exposure to a college campus is an added bonus. Yet, if the student is three grade-levels behind in reading, tutoring time is not being maximized with this college student. In this example, an elementary student in need of remediation services is instead receiving exposure and enrichment services.

FOTC should have a three-tiered system of tutoring options to which mentors should match their youth. Importantly, matching youth to tutoring services should be done in conjunction with frequent and targeted communication with teachers (see recommendation #4) and with youth-led support plans (see recommendation #2).

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Three-tiered Tutoring

Type of Service	Who should receive this service?	Who should fulfill this service?
Exposure and Enrichment	All students who do not need either of the other two types of service.	Volunteers and staff: - older youth for younger youth - undergraduate students - adults without special training
Guided Practice	Students who need support with homework or study skills. These students might be slightly behind in their schoolwork due to absences or poor study habits.	Adults with tutoring experience and/or training in the following areas: - study skills - demonstrated competence in the subject area
Remediation	Students who are significantly behind in their grade-level development. These academic challenges may be due to excessive absences, traumatic experiences that caused continued distractions, learning disabilities, or poor instruction.	Adults with significant training and experience in remediation. These tutors should have the following: - demonstrated success teaching in a similar grade and subject area OR extensive tutor training and experience - a strategic skill-set for remediation at a specific grade-level and within a specific subject area

The existing tutoring pool at FOTC may fit within these categories. For example, some existing volunteers have the background to serve youth in need of remediation. However, it is likely that there is a deficit of remediation tutors in light of the academic needs of youth. If sufficient volunteers cannot be found to fulfill remediation services, it is suggested that paid tutors be employed to fill this essential need.

In many cases, the more exact matching of youth to tutor will require more work on the part of mentors. In order to arrange tutoring for their youth, mentors must often find opportunities on their own, make arrangements, and provide transportation. In order to minimize the burden on mentors, FOTC should create more tutoring options at the remediation level. Mentors should be able to elect tutoring services that do not require regular transportation on their part. In necessary situations, tutors should be paid to travel to the home, a neutral meeting spot, or meet at a youth's school. Importantly, a youth in need of remediation tutoring will need ongoing tutoring services; a mentor's weekly time with a youth is not maximized if it is regularly spent transporting the youth back and forth to tutoring services.

#9) Address “Burnout”

Given that the youth FOTC serve face significant challenges as they prepare for life after high school, a mentor can easily become overwhelmed with providing them holistic support. Often, mentors are caught-up in youth challenges that revolve around the most basic needs (i.e. housing, safety, emotional stability, etc...). To a certain extent, it is impossible to address issues of academic achievement, career development, and CSN if a youth’s basic needs are not met. Thus, in order to sustain FOTC staff in mentoring positions for long periods of time and to expect mentors to attend to youth development beyond basic needs, FOTC must develop stronger partnerships with organizations that can help mentors holistically support youth and their families. The resource exchange should maintain a diverse list of resources for mentors to access on a regular basis. These resources should be current and the groundwork for referrals should be clearly established for the mentors. These resources are required in the following areas: career and education support for youths’ families, health care, mental health, legal services, and housing.

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Appendices

A. Sample Youth-led Success Plans (And Youth-led Success Model)

Grade-level Master Checklists* for Postsecondary Preparation (The First Step in the Youth-led Success Plan)

Early Elementary Checklist

<p><input type="checkbox"/> School Work I can think of 3 things I like about school.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Academic Development I like to read and play math games. I get remediation tutoring if my teacher thinks I am behind in school.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Positive Adult Relationships I know how and when to ask my teacher for help. I also know how to greet and say good-bye to teachers, administrators, and school staff in a way that they like.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Choices I can explain why working hard at school is a good thing.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Areas of Interest I can tell someone what I want to do when I grow up.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Professional Mentorship I can name at least 10 different professions and give a general description of the duties they require.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Extracurricular Activities I am exposed to at least two extra-curricular activities that I enjoy. These are activities that might serve me well in my middle school or high school years.</p>
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**Correlation Between Master Checklists for Postsecondary Preparation and FOTC-Portland Milestones*

Milestones Category	Checklist Category(s)
School Success	School Work, Academic Development, Choices
Social and Emotional Development	Positive Adult Relationships, Extracurricular activities
Making Good Choices	Positive Adult Relationships, Choices, Professional Mentorship
Improved Healthcare	No direct affiliation
Plans and Skills for the Future	Choices, Areas of Interest, Professional Mentorship, Extracurricular Activities

A. Continued

Late Elementary Checklist

☐ **School Work**

I understand the grading system in my classroom. I understand that grades are not only about what I know, but how I show that I know it.

☐ **Academic Development**

I read for fun. I know how to do my homework independently. I get remediation tutoring if my teacher thinks I am behind in school.

☐ **Positive Adult Relationships**

I can tell my mentor what kinds of behaviors my teacher likes and dislikes. I know my principal's name. I know how to avoid getting in trouble on the playground.

☐ **Choices**

I can explain why working hard at school is a good thing.

☐ **Areas of Interest**

I can tell someone what I want to do for a job when I grow up. I can also tell that person why I would be good at that job.

☐ **Professional Mentorship**

I have met at least one person with a job that I would like to have when I grow up. In a professional setting, I am able to introduce myself to an adult and explain why I want a particular job when I grow up.

☐ **Extracurricular Activities**

I am exposed to at least two extra-curricular activities that I enjoy. These activities might serve me well in my middle school or high school years.

A. Continued

Middle School Checklist

☐ **School Work**

I can make sense of my academic grades at school. I can begin to understand why I get high or low grades. I have an organizational system to manage my multiple classes.

☐ **Academic Development**

I do at least one extra activity weekly that promotes my academic strengths. I do at least one extra activity weekly that helps to close gaps in my academic weaknesses.

☐ **Positive Adult Relationships**

I know at least one adult at school with whom I have shared my academic and/or life goals. This is a person who supports me!

☐ **Choices**

I can write or talk about a list of pros and cons to the decisions I make on a daily basis. I should start to integrate this ability into my decision-making.

☐ **Areas of Interest**

I can connect activities I like to potential career paths. This means I have read about, talked about and/or observed how at least one or more of the jobs within this career path work.

☐ **Professional Mentorship**

I have participated in at least one professional experience with an adult whose career I find interesting. I feel comfortable talking to and asking questions of this mentor. I know what to do in order to make a positive and lasting impression on this mentor!

☐ **Extracurricular Activities**

I participate in at least one activity that I will commit to doing for at least a year.

A. Continued

9th and 10th Grade Checklist

☐ **School Work**

I can explain exactly why I get the grades that I do. I have a system for keeping track of due dates and assignments.

☐ **Academic Development**

I do at least one extra activity weekly that promotes my academic strengths. I do at least one extra activity weekly that helps to close gaps in my academic weaknesses.

☐ **Positive Adult Relationships**

I know at least two adults at school who would be happy to recommend me for a job or admission to an educational program. I regularly update them on the work I am doing to achieve my goals.

☐ **Choices**

I can write or talk about a list of pros and cons to the decisions I make on a daily basis. I can integrate this ability into my decision-making.

☐ **Areas of Interest**

I am able to connect activities I like to potential career paths. I know about the experience and educational requirements of these career paths. I make goal and choices according to these requirements.

☐ **Professional Mentorship**

I have participated in at least one professional experience with an adult whose career I find interesting. I know what to do in order to make a positive and lasting impression in a professional setting. I will spend at least part of my summer learning about a profession that interests me.

☐ **Extracurricular Activities**

I participate in at least one activity that I will commit to doing for at least one year.

A. Continued

11th and 12th Grade Checklist

This checklist should be viewed in conjunction with FOTC - Portland's graduation plan.

☐ **School Work**

I can explain exactly why I get the grades that I do. I have a system for keeping track of due dates and assignments.

☐ **Academic Development**

I do at least one extra activity weekly that helps me prepare for the academic demands of my future (test preparation, specialized reading, tutoring, etc...).

☐ **Positive Adult Relationships**

I know at least two adults at school and one adult outside of school (not counting my FOTC mentor) who would be happy to recommend me for a job or admission to an educational program. I regularly update them on the work I am doing to achieve my goals.

☐ **Choices**

I can write or talk about a list of pros and cons to the decisions I make on a daily basis. I can integrate this ability into my decision-making.

☐ **Areas of Interest**

I have one or two career paths in mind. I know about the experience and educational requirements of these career paths. I make goals and choices according to these requirements.

☐ **Professional Mentorship**

I have participated in at least one professional experiences related to the career path(s) I have in mind. I have made efforts to maintain a networking relationship with one or more of the professionals I met.

☐ **Extracurricular Activities**

I participate in at least one activity that I will commit to doing for at least one year.

A. Continued

Sample Youth-led Success Plan

7th Grade Youth

Career Goal(s)

Interests	Strengths	Growth Areas	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Animals Moving around and being busy Making money Drawing Video games 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good listener- I help people when they have problems Good with animals Hard worker- especially in competition Math and History 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expressing my opinion and talking to new people Reading Writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find a professional mentor who works with animals. And seek out opportunities to volunteer. Meet and have a conversation with a new person every week (with my Friend's help) Find more books that interest me. Then read at least one new book for fun every month. Enter two writing contests this year. Work with a tutor to create excellent entries.

Personal Goal(s)

Interests	Strengths	Growth Areas	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn more about Black history Get along better with my sister Make more friends at school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good listener- I help people when they have problems Hard worker- especially in competition. I am a really good friend. I am loyal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk to people. Don't be afraid of saying the "wrong" thing. Find better ways to express myself when I am mad at my sister. Talk to my teachers more often. Help them see the real me. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watch documentaries about Black history with my Friend. When my friends aren't with me at school, ask a nice person from class if I can eat with her/him at lunch. And ask to join the kickball game. Do something nice for my sister. And apologize if I hurt her feelings.

A. Continued

Youth-led Success Model (Aligned with FOTC – Portland Milestones)

Below is a re-working of the Youth-led Success Plan based on initial FOTC feedback. This represents a conversational model that does not require a written document.



A. Continued

My Future

Things that interest me:

People and things I care about most:

Goals For My Future (Personal and Professional):

	<i>How do I want to grow?</i> (short-term goals related to goals for the future and self-assessment)	<i>Why do I want this?</i> (the benefits of reaching the short-term goals)	<i>How can I make it happen?</i> (the plan for reaching the short-term goals)
My Choices			
My Relationships			
My School			
My Health			

Sample Guiding Questions for CRN Using Milestone Outcomes (Early Elementary)

Plan and Skills for the Future	Making Good Choices	Social and Emotional Development	School Success	Improved Health Care	...AND
<p>Can you name at least 5 different kinds of careers? Can you describe each one?</p> <p>Do you have some ideas about what you want to do when you grow up?</p>	<p>Do you know how to solve a problem with a classmate?</p> <p>Do you know how to solve a problem with a teacher?</p> <p>Can you explain how and why you might act different in two different situations? (i.e. your classroom and playing with your neighborhood friend)</p>	<p>Do you know how to ask your teacher for help? Greet and say goodbye? Tell her/him about your weekend?</p> <p>Are you involved in activities that you like? Do they help you makes friends and learn?</p>	<p>Can you name three things you like about school?</p> <p>Do you like to read and play math games?</p> <p>Do you know how people become smarter? Are you doing it?</p>	<p>Does your body get exercise at least once a day?</p> <p>Do you eat fruits and veggies everyday?</p> <p>Do you know how to brush your teeth and wash your face? Why is it important to do this everyday before school?</p>	<p>IF SO...</p> <p>HOW CAN YOU MAKE SURE THIS CONTINUES?</p> <p>IF NOT...</p> <p>*WHAT IS GETTING IN YOUR WAY?</p> <p>**WHY IS SOMETHING IN YOUR WAY?</p> <p>***HOW CAN YOU IMPROVE THIS WITH MY HELP?</p>

A. Continued

****WHAT IS GETTING IN YOUR WAY?***

This question will help you identify issues with translation. Does the youth understand the root of the issues? Is it a question of differing perspectives or objectives?

For example, if the youth does not know why she cannot solve problems with her teacher, you must help her understand what is happening when she is in conflict with her teacher.

*****WHY IS SOMETHING IN YOUR WAY?***

This question will further help you identify issues with translation. Does the youth understand her role in the issue? Does she understand other relevant parties' roles in the issue? Can she identify the link between her objectives and her behavior? What about that of other parties?

For example, if a youth does not know why her teacher requires her to be totally quiet for the first 10 minutes of class, you must help her understand why this is important to the teacher AND identify why she is struggling to fulfill this request.

******HOW CAN YOU IMPROVE THIS WITH MY HELP?***

This question will help guide and coach a youth through making short-term goals, making a plan to meet those goals, following that plan, and assessing progress towards the goals. Once she understands what the issue is and why it is occurring, she needs to determine how to address the issue in a way that supports her long-term goals, but does not dismiss the people/things/beliefs that are important to her.

For example, perhaps a youth often needs to talk to her teacher at the beginning of class because she is having trouble with a peer who is provoking her. Perhaps her mother has instructed her to immediately respond to her peer, either by telling the teacher or standing up for herself. Once the youth understands that her teacher is paid to take attendance and prepare for a lesson, thus needs 10 minutes of quiet at the beginning of class, she can think of alternatives. Can she problem solve with the teacher by setting an appointment with the teacher? Can she write the teacher a note at the beginning of each class period? Is the problem really more closely linked to her conflict with a peer? Can she better explain to her mom why she must wait to talk with the teacher?

B. Suggested Resource Exchange Organization

	Grade-level Standards Practice	CSN	Visual Arts and Design	Performing Arts	Engineering	Human and Animal Healthcare/ Psychology	Teaching, Counseling, and Human Relations	Sports and Kinesthetic Interests	Communication and Leadership	Physics, Chemistry, and Math
Grades K-1										
Grades 2-3										
Grades 3-4										
Grades 5-6*										
Grades 7-8										
Grades 8-9										
Prof. Mentor	X									
Jobs & Internships	X									

Career and Education for Families	Tutoring
Health care	Exposure and Enrichment - Elementary, Middle School, High School (by subject)
Housing	Guided Practice - Elementary, Middle School, High School (by subject)
Mental Health	Remediation - Elementary, Middle School, High School (by subject)
Child Services	

B. Continued

* Sample Resources for Grades 5-6

	Grade-level Standards Practice	CSN	Visual Arts and Design	Performing Arts	Engineering	Human and Animal Healthcare and Psychology	Teaching, Counseling, and Human Relations	Sports and Kinesthetic Interests	Communication and Leadership	Physics, Chemistry, and Math
Grade 5-6	ELA: Fiction Poetry Persuasive Writing Book Club Math: Place Value Estimate Division Fractions Proportions Geometry	See App. C.	Readings: American Music Activities: Act-out a Greek Myth Outings: American Realist Exhibit	Activities: Dance Theatre of Harlem Youtube: Story-telling 101	MP3 Portland Bridge Tour	A Day in the Life of a Surgeon	Reverse Roles: Youth teaches mentor	Reading: Sports Medicine Activities: Tennis Court Training Ideas Outings: Army Obstacle Course	Reading: Lesser Known Civil Rights Leaders Activities: Peanut Butter and Jelly Blindfolded Improvisation I	Readings: John Dalton Atoms Molecules Volcanoes Activities: Water Wonders Experiment Light Experiment

C. Sample “Mentor-Created” CSN Resource

Middle School Youth in Conflict with a Teacher

Summary: My 6th grade youth has been struggling with her English teacher since the beginning of the year. She is earning poor grades in the class and reports that the teacher does not like her. Below are the steps we took to solve the problem.

Step 1- Speak Directly to the Teacher

I emailed my youth’s teacher and she agreed to meet with me the following day. Upon meeting the teacher, I realized she was really frustrated with my youth. The teacher said that my youth regularly sat in the back of the classroom with her friends and chatted. It became apparent that the teacher had never spoken to my youth one-on-one about the problem and regularly assigned her lunch detention in the gym as a consequence of her talking in class.

Step 2- Translating

I talked to my youth about the problem. She thought the teacher disliked her because she was not good at writing. This made my youth angry because she likes writing! Her first grade in the class was low. Plus, when she first spoke in class the teacher embarrassed her because she mispronounced the word “genre”. I explained that the teacher was frustrated because she sat with her friends and prioritized talking over learning in class. My youth explained that she sat with her friends because it was fun... but also because she did not want to embarrass herself again.

Step 3- Problem Solving

I asked my youth to make a list of the things she liked about her teacher. She thought her teacher was smart, weird, and good at reading and writing. Then I asked her to write a list of the things her teacher needed to do better. She thought her teacher could listen better, be more patient, and not judge her students. Next, we made a list of things my youth could do to benefit from the “like” list and help with the “do better list”. My youth thought she could stop talking to friends in class. I pushed her to explain what this would look like in the classroom. She eventually made a list of friends she should not sit near because they distracted her. She struggled with ideas for helping her teacher become a better listener and to stop judging her students, so I suggested she talk to her teacher about her negative feelings. I also suggested she tell her teacher what she liked about the class. Lastly, I suggested she ask the teacher to give her a second chance and ask for help.

C. Continued

Step 4- Conversation Practice

My youth was really nervous about talking to her teacher. She asked me to help her make an appointment with her teacher because she didn't think her teacher would agree to talk to her. I agreed that I would email her teacher on my youth's behalf. Next, we practiced the conversation. First, she was the teacher and I was the student. She acted stressed-out and annoyed (mimicking her teacher). I took a time-out and told my youth I could see why she was nervous! Then we tried again and I started the conversation with all the things I liked about class (in the role as the student). Even playing-up her teacher's annoyance, my youth couldn't help but smile when I gave her several compliments. Then (as the student), I showed her how to be honest about her feelings and ask for help. Lastly, we switched roles. She was the student and I was the teacher. We practiced at least five times.

Step 5- Debrief

My youth was eager to tell me about the conversation with her teacher. She reported to me that her teacher seemed surprised by the compliments. She said that she had trouble expressing her feelings to her teacher, but overall the conversation went well. The teacher suggested that my youth sit in the front row and away from her friends. My youth agreed. But she still felt uneasy about her teacher embarrassing her if she wasn't with her friends. She decided that she would feel more confident writing her feelings in her journal. She agreed to give her teacher her journal to read.

Step 6- Coaching

My youth showed her teacher the journal and her teacher returned it with an apology note. My youth was really happy about this result! She had never received an apology note from an adult. Over the past month, my youth and I have been debriefing weekly about her participation in class. She has had a few set-backs: she made a mistake in front of the class that embarrassed her and she was caught talking to a friend in the back of the classroom during a quiet time. However, she noticed that her teacher gave her a warning for talking and it did not make her feel embarrassed or angry; it just served as a reminder. She noted that she did not mind if her teacher gave her a warning once in a while because the teacher did not act annoyed anymore. I explained to my youth that, in her teacher's eyes, she had proven that she wanted to do well in class, that she cared. I suggested that she remember that many teachers were like this one; they often do not assume that kids care, want to learn, or like writing. She is starting to realize she has quite a bit of control over the way teachers perceive her. We are still working on taking risks in class and not being afraid to fail.

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D. Sample K-5 Weekly Progress Report

Weekly Report for Sammy

Teacher's Name Ms. Jackson

Mentor's Name Abdul

Notes from the Mentor

- Last week we worked on all of Sammy's "ou" spelling words. Should we move to new ones this week?
- I think Sammy is still nervous about reading his "challenge" books out loud. He felt more comfortable reading without other kids around - but he read both books out loud three times! I have noticed a big change in him since you switched his reading group 😊.
- Next week we are going to the aquarium as a reward for improved grades on his spelling tests. I thought it would be a nice trip to take while you all are in the sea life unit.

Notes from the Teacher

Improvements/Updates/Concerns

Ways to support the student outside the classroom this week:

New concepts or units of study in the classroom:

THANK YOU!

E. Resources for Creating Critical Social Navigation Activities

Teaching Tolerance

<http://www.tolerance.org/>

“Founded in 1991 by the Southern Poverty Law Center, Teaching Tolerance is dedicated to reducing prejudice, improving intergroup relations and supporting equitable school experiences for our nation's children.”

Learn NC -> Educational Resources -> Critical Literacy

<http://www.learnnc.org>

- History and theory of critical literacy
- Critical literacy in practice
- Critical literacy and social action
- Critical literacy in the classroom

The Freire Project -> Resources

<http://www.freireproject.org>

“The Freire Project is dedicated to building an international critical community which works to promote social justice in a variety of cultural contexts. We are committed to conducting and sharing critical research in social, political, and educational locations.”